Modesto Anarcho

Against the politics of death - for the liberation of life!

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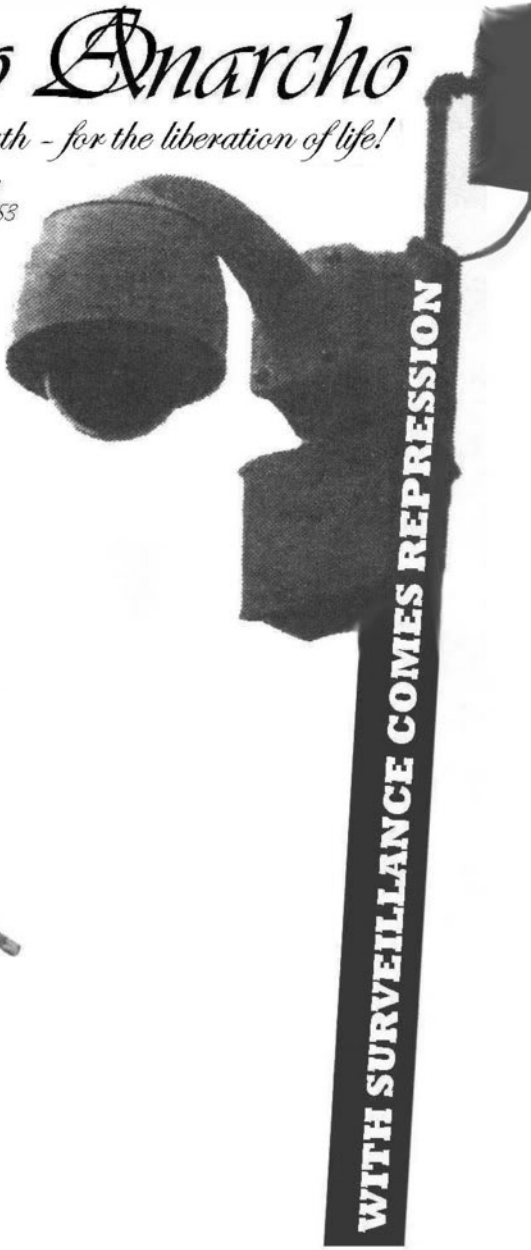

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"Throughout the world the vast majority of people have no control over the most basic social, economic and political decisions which profoundly and directly affect their lives. We are forced to live, work, consume and die according to the dictates of hierarchical organizations-from schools, churches, corporations and unions, to their culmination in the nation-state. Anarchy literally means no ruler. In its best sense it signifies a social system in which political hierarchies and authoritarianism are not tolerated, and demands the most complete, widespread and effectively direct control possible by all those who are involved. Not just control over institutional organization and management, but over their direction, ends and very existence. This can only be achieved through widespread and conscious commitment to libertarian social and institutional values and practices (self-management, spontaneity, autonomy, cooperation, human-scale organization, direct accountability/action, and maximum flexibility) within a reorganized framework centered around effective means of libertarian communication and decision-making." - Disarm Authority//Arm Your Desires
C.A.L. Press

WELCOME!

A couple of months ago, radicals from Davis, Modesto, and elsewhere descended on Fresno CA for the first (to our knowledge) Central Valley Anarchist Gathering. There was food, fun, skill sharing, shared experiences, workshops, and various discussions on a wide range of topics. We left with a new sense of togetherness within our shared region. With an Anarchist Café taking place in Modesto (which will be over by the time you read this) we hope to reunite with anarchists and anti-authoritarians in the Central Valley once again.

Taking the second issue of Modesto Anarcho to the gathering felt good. It was nice to put into someone's hands a collection of ideas that would spur discussion (good or bad). We hope that this issue is no different. Happily we also got issues #1 and #2 out into infoshops across CA. We hope that many of you out there somehow just ran across this journal, borrowed it from a friend, or found it in an infoshop. Don't let it sit on a shelf, keep it moving and pass it along! We are still looking for letters into the journal, artwork, articles, poems, and much more. We hope to put Modesto Anarcho #4 out by August, (so have any submissions in by July). To view this journal online or just to see what's happening around this area, check out: www.geocities.com/anarcho209, or email us at: anarcho209@yahoo.com.

This issue deals with a wide range of topics. The state of the anarchist movement itself, mental health and civilization, local issues such as surveillance cameras, (and what to do about them), guerrilla gardening, and much more. With May Day around the corner, we hope to see many of you out in the streets. If not during days of action, then during our everyday experiences dealing with the poverty we call modern existence. We will see you there, if not in person, at least in spirit.

Special thanks for this issue must go out to John Zerzan (of the Green Anarchy Collective in Eugene Oregon) and Derrick Jensen for agreeing to do the interview with us and working through the process. Thanks! We also want to thank the CAFÉ Collective in Fresno for all the help that they have given us in the past months and all the shared ad ventures.

-Nagi and crudo

This journal should not take the place of a discussion! If you don't like what you see in here, start your own zine (or write to us!)

Modesto Anarcho is published by a group of people out of the Central Valley town of Modesto quarterly. Find out more info at: www.geocities.com/anarcho209, email us at: anarcho209@yahoo.com, or write to us at: Modesto Anarcho, PO Box 3027, Modesto, CA 95353

Back issues of Modesto Anarcho #1 and #2 are $2 each. For 10 or more, $1 each.

Nothing in this journal is meant to endorse illegal actions and is for educational purposes only.

SCENES FROM THE STRUGGLE
NEWS, ACTIONS, EVENTS

Fresno - A proposal to bring nuclear power to Fresno got a hostile reception in late spring. A newly formed collection of business leaders and industry heads calling themselves, "The Fresno Nuclear Energy Group", is hoping to build support for a power plant in the valley by promoting nuclear energy as a "green" energy system, a job creator, and a cheap source of energy.

Protestors caused a disruption to the group's public presentation in Fresno, and police and security hustled a few protestors out of the event on Thursday, February 25th. Hecklers continually scoffed at the presenter Patrick Moore's claims about the safety of nuclear power. Moore, who bills himself as a co-founder of the environmental group Greenpeace believes Fresno could use a nuclear power plant. In 1976, Moore was calling nuclear power, "the most dangerous devices that man has ever created. Their construction and proliferation is the most irresponsible, in fact the most criminal, act ever to have taken place on this planet." Now, thanks to corporate backing, (including the plastic, timber, and nuclear industries), his tune has changed. It is through former activist sell-outs like Moore that corporations are seeking to appear 'green' to the public.

Anarchists outside protested, held banners, and talked with people about the dangers that nuclear power presents to the earth, communities, and ecosystems. Some present also commented on the fact that the plant is proposed to be built on the "poor" side of Fresno, away from the more wealthy communities.

Industrial capitalism will never be sustainable!

Keep an eye on:
www.inbybay.org/centralvalley

Modesto - In February, anarchists in Modesto celebrated the release of Peter Young by throwing a letter writing and vegan potluck party. Participants talked about the 'green scare', grand juries, and political prisoners. There was a film screening of "Behind the Mask" and letters were written to various prisoners. Soon after, it was learned that Jeff "Free" Luers sentence was probably going to be reduced! Although this is good news, it does not mean that we should stop with our actions (big or small) or letting up in our support for political prisoners. For more info on support for prisoners, see the 'Materials and Resources' page in this journal.

Also in February, anarchists held an Anarchist Cafe', with free-food, workshops, and a band. Participants reclaimed a local park and it was reported that spray painted stencils, chalk messages, and slogans were left behind at the scene.

Stanislaus County - Modesto police, sheriffs, and the DA want to make it easier to deport "illegal" immigrants in Stanislaus County. Pigs want to make it "harder for illegal immigrants who are accused of crimes to get back on the streets", meaning that they would "hold illegal immigrants who have been arrested, and that they would not be eligible for bail."

Before this news broke, police were claiming in the media that local law enforcement agencies didn't have the time, money, or interest to go after immigrants. The police will always lie to those they seek to control and show their brutality through their actions. People need to learn that the police are the armies of the state and can never be trusted.

In the past few weeks, ICE (immigration services) assigned an agent to Stanislaus County, meaning that with added pressure from the local pigs, immigrant communities are in need of solidarity. Mass rallies and protests are being called again for May 1st, express your rage in the streets! The District Attorney's office is also located at: 832 12th Street, Suite 300, Modesto, California 95354

ROGUES AGAINST THE STATE:

SOME NOTES ON THE CURRENT MOVEMENT

By crudo

"We do not assume that our world is inevitably heading toward a libratory transformation of social relations. [However], if there is a choice between cynicism and hopelessness or a determined and focused attack on the present institutions of domination, we choose the latter." - A Murder of Crows, Issue #1, March 2006

Revolution is still possible - yet hardly inevitable

1.

As those of the oppressed and excluded we must abolish class society and work. This is our project. We must reject the idea of building a mass movement directed by a single line of thought or ideology, group or organization, and instead think about how we can participate in (let alone foster) a complete social transformation. The desire to create one monolithic anarchist organization reflects the same desire as that of the Marxist-Leninist version of "the Party", even if it is veiled under the description of "directly democratic" and "decentralized". This is a desire to direct, convert, and manage "the mass", as opposed to existing and acting within our class, community, or bioregion, (with other proles and militants) towards a self-organized existence. To me however, a rejection of the approach of 'activism' doesn't mean that we should exclude ourselves from daily life and those around us, hiding in little ghettos to become masters of what Makhno called, the "paper revolution". Far from it, we need to realize that we are of the oppressed and excluded and of those apart from the ruling elites. We need to act along side and with the oppressed for we are of them and show through our actions and relationships what our anti-politics are. It is through struggle and personal affinity that we will gain more people interested in our ideas, spaces, and projects. It is also through struggle that we will find more in common with others that may have the same desires and be engaging in a similar praxis, yet not with the same set of labels. Our task is to be able to act within various social tensions that exist within society and connect with others, to create and maintain autonomous zones so we can grow, build, learn, stay sane, and also to be able to defend and expand ourselves and those zones by any means necessary. Let our tendency spread like a virus, leaving dead authoritarians (of all stripes) in it's wake.

2.

The grouping of all oppressed people into one set organization may have made sense when it was thought that the only thing necessary for revolution was taking over the means of production. However, since industrial capitalism (or if you prefer 'civilization') is a threat to a wild healthy planet, people's lives, other species (and all the other nasty and alienating things that come from the industrial workplace) then we should abandon any hopes of "self-managing" it through our own labors. Many 'class struggle anarchists' have also forgotten that living in cities, working in factories, the creation of private property and the imposition of class society in general was all done to subjugate people into a division of labor (and thus classes) for the sake of gaining surplus, capital, and power. Organizing around class lines is a possible strategy for social revolution, but if we aren't against the basic foundations of class society in general, then what is the point?

3.

The current infrastructure (which constitutes the present technological apparatus) was meant to serve capital, not us. Decentralization of production and increased technological automation has in part been implemented to halt the possibility of workers revolting at a centralized point of production and hurting the flow of capital. Therefore, using the same infrastructure that is meant to keep the gears of capital and state humming should be totally abandoned. Also, production for things like computers is based around 'harvesting' resources that are found in certain geographic regions throughout the world. In a future society of various autonomous regions, production and resource abstraction would require the destruction of certain areas to provide the materials for things like cell phones and computers, even if it was done collectively and via self-management. We cannot continue to warp our world around industrial culture, it is as un-ecologically sound as it is non-congruent to anarchy.

4.

Civilization will not simply collapse, turning everyone into Robinson Crusoe, (or at least just the cool anarchist kids), this is as misguided as wanting to take over the death culture. Even if the lights go out or the top soil goes bad, the global elite will not stop being the global elite. Even now, many of them are trying to figure out how they can 'save our economy' and 'stop global warming', realizing that complete ecological disaster is a threat to capital's hold over the world. It is quite possible that ecological collapse on some level could happen, (peak oil, dead oceans, etc) and it is also possible that the elites will take major steps to make sure that some of the damage is reduced (as so much damage has already been done). Whatever the outcome, it remains clear that any environmental problems will not signal the end of the elites hold over the earth and those living on it. Moreover, as ecological and social problems become greater and more open social tensions occur, the chances of the left launching some sort of thrust for power is greater and we need to be able to be strong enough to push for a total social transformation. Unwillingness to engage in a revolutionary struggle against state and capital (and the authoritarian left) will only signal a bleaker future with more of the same.

5.

Any modern class struggle needs to be against class itself and for the total abolition and destruction of work (or wage labor, a division of labor, industrialism, the format of the city, etc), even if our actions occur in and around the workplace itself. Many 'green anarchists' have failed to take any heed to the possibilities of the revolt against work (sabotage, wild cat strikes, actions outside of the unions) and instead perceive that anything existing in or around the industrial workplace is shit (even if it's the people inside struggling). Within struggles such as these there is a 'selfish class desire' that exists because people are more willing to struggle for things that affect them directly. However we need to take this thinking a step further and realize that it is desirable to destroy work and the civilization that has produced a society where all life must be bent around it. By this I mean that the struggle against industrial society can be one of motivated class interest and not just a desire to "save the earth", (as well intended or valid as that may be). The question now, as always, is how do we proceed?

Against Activism

6.

For most of my existence as a conscious anarchist, I was an activist. Most of the organizing work that I did in my local area was through the anarchist collective Direct Action Anti-Authoritarians, or DAAA Collective for short. Most of our activity revolved around our collective doing projects that largely repeated themselves and sought to "build mass" by trying to get more people into the group. Meaning, we wanted to be "the movement" as opposed to participating in an autonomous social movement of various projects, individuals, and groups. Really Free Markets, Food Not Bombs, literature distribution, Copwatch, etc, drew in and 'touched' many people, but these projects often didn't reflect our direct needs and desires (other than to be active and to do something as anarchists, but see the article in Modesto Anarcho #2 on "Against Anarcho-Charity" for more on this subject). While these projects gained us a lot of respect and notoriety as an activist organization, we largely were seen as another charity that busied itself with giving out food, clothing, and other needed items. This view of the group as a charity meant that many people's understanding of us was that we were simply a resource to draw from and this meant that people created connections with us not through physical struggle, but because we had something that they needed. Energy and time was largely spent toward keeping the collective simply alive, generally through the continuation of a set checklist of repeating projects. Our time and resources went into continuing these few set projects that we became very good at continuing over the years (mainly literature distribution with Anarchist Café, and variations of Food Not Bombs) and for many of us, did not want to become critical of. The better we got at being an activist group, the more distanced we got from those that we wanted to revolt with and the more we became specialists in projects that did little to actually challenge power.

7.

Towards the end of DAAA Collective, I felt that our approach did somewhat change as we worked to include ourselves in various local struggles that were going on. This ranged from things like helping out at strikes, to participating in Copwatch organized by migrant farm workers. While all of this was great stuff, and I would do it again, because we wanted to gain recognition to DAAA Collective as an organization, we often were uneasy to

engage in any sort of action or organizing that fell away from general support. This uneasiness generally meant that we often did not try and find ourselves at odds with left, union, church, or other set bureaucracies that were often active in set struggles we were supporting, but instead tried to seek their approval. Why were we even interested in there approval in the first place? We should have been wheatpasting posters over town calling for a general strike and autonomous resistance outside of the unions - instead of talking to ALF-CIO leaders about how we could help. We should have been fighting Nazis in the streets - instead of seeking approval from churches that were vandalized by racists for a thumbs up about our anti-politics. We should have been kicking in doors of abandoned houses with friends to open squats - instead of wasting gas driving across town to get vegetables for Food Not Bombs. In short, we should have acted like our ideas meant something, instead of acting like just a bunch of...activists.

8.

To be against activism and for a complete social transformation means that we desire the destruction of hierarchal society and openly desire it's abolition. We seek anti-politics, meaning the rejection of representative forms of struggle and a praxis of insurrectionary attack, or the use of actions which seek to destroy any existence of the state and capital and allows for the self-organization of revolt and life. This does not mean that people shouldn't use activist approaches from time to time (for instance organizing events to fundraise for political prisoners). But in general we need to find a strategy that exists outside of going from protest to protest and from issue to issue. We are in the middle of a social war, not a disagreement between various sides that can reach a compromise.

Beyond Activism

9.

One of the joys of realizing that class and social struggle is everywhere is being able to see this as a social war, (or a violent confrontation between hierarchal and autonomous forms of social interactions). Modern society creates various tensions within it and these are tensions that we can act within and work to expand into wider attack and critique. We can see (historically and presently) that there are tendencies within oppressed and exploited people's struggles towards self-organization and a desire to fight for their own interests through insurrection, sabotage, direct action, and self-activity. In fact, many of the historical reference points for the current anarchist movement have all been social

uprisings in which almost hardly any anarchists were involved. Hungry 56', Paris 68', Argentina, Oaxaca, Albania, Algeria, etc. This is not to say that anarchists didn't play a part in this struggles, but that overall these examples showed largely anarchist tactics in action without them being first "taught" to the 'awaiting masses'. Sometimes self-organization can happen in small groups like with rent strikes, wildcat strikes, appropriating land and goods, killing cops, etc. Sometimes this happens in mass, as in the anti-HR 4437 student walk outs. If we are active participants within these struggles and are approaching them in the context of revolutionary solidarity (and not seeking to absorb them into an existing organization or represent them), then we have a starting place for possible action.

10.

Some actions did take place over the years while I was involved in DAAA Collective in the local area that did fit other patterns outside of activism. For instance, during the SBC strike in Modesto several years ago, anarchists vandalized an SBC corporate office with slogans like, "Off the Boss", and "We Don't Need the Bosses - They Need Us!". Although this was a small action, the desire was to push for a greater critique of the situation beyond simply a call for higher wages. During a recent rally called by local rent strikers, anarchists showed up and passed out stickers (reading: Rent is Theft, Solidarity with all Rent Strikers), passed out flyers (see the article in Modesto Anarcho #2) and also distributed food and herbal medicine. While our message was way more radical then anything that the rent strikers had put forth, many of them were extremely glad that we had shown solidarity with them and taken the time to come out with materials and supplies. Many of the protestors stuck the 'Rent is Theft' stickers on their shirts and passed out our flyers. Conversations were struck up, and new relationships were made. When asked if we were an organization, we replied that we were a group of friends that was organized and wanted to help and expand the strike. They respected our position because it was one of genuine desire and respect. We were fellow people facing the horrors of everyday life and we were trying to find ways to change that. This should be our heading. Connections with real people building real relationships through struggle and personal affinity.

11.

A point needs to be made that applying more insurrectionary tactics to various struggles as opposed to more activist variants is not 'vulgar vanguardism', as some would put it. Meaning, we do not seek to create a vanguard of "the most militant" or to steer struggles out of the hands of those who initiate them in the first place. In the case of the rent strikers in Ceres, it probably would have served no one if we had shown up in ski masks and started breaking things during their protest. However, if groups on the other side of the country took initiative and conducted actions against the firm that owns the mobile home park where the rent strikers are currently struggling in, (a company which was raising their rent, causing them to go on strike), those actions could have the possibility to lead to very positive results. It is through action (and the propaganda work of explaining the anti-politics behind those actions) that we wish to use to push various isolated revolts into possibly wider open war.

Creating Autonomous Space

12.

The creation of autonomous space is crucial if anarchist and revolutionary anti-authoritarian ideals are going to survive and create what many of us desire: a multi-generational movement. By this I mean a movement that can replicate itself again and again and retains the older generation while creating the next one. In some countries this has meant squats and social centers, in the U.S. infoshops and collective houses (to a certain degree). Autonomous space allows for a variety of participation within movements from people with various degrees of comfort and ability when it comes to action and allows more individuals to plug into social movements that just a core group of people. It also allows 'drop-out' counter-culture to form. By this I do not mean the negative "lifestylist" escapism that is rampant within the anarchist subculture, but I mean autonomous masses of people who reject the current society and instead try and build their own "within the shell of the old", in defiance and resistance to authoritarian society. The more people that drop out, the more energy people have to put into destroying the current frameworks of domination.

13.

I do not mean to fetishize one specific form of autonomous space, be it the infoshop, collective house, squat, forest village, what have you. I simply mean a self-organized area (or liberated zone that radicals inhabit) where people can unplug from the current system and work towards abolishing it. This could be a hang out spot, your room, a back yard garden, or whatever you have in your abilities. In this sense, I think that it is impossible to separate creating autonomous space from creating a revolutionary "culture", (or perhaps "folk culture" to use CrimethInc. terms). How you go about creating a culture I don't know and to some degree an anarchist culture already does exist, although the common reference points are only to those existing in the current milieu. This is largely the "culture of the scene" and often is simply full of punk, vegan, and activist reference points that seem to keep others out and isolate us in our own little ghettos. If industrial culture produces individuals which recreate the current society, we must create a revolutionary culture which seeks it's total destruction and yearns for a new liberatory one.

14.

Creating insurrectionary communities I think is also part of a crucial revolutionary process. This goes beyond just setting up collective houses, squats, and such. Meaning, to create social groupings that can expand themselves out and conquer more space (thus more autonomous breathing room) and also

use that space to attack the forces of hierarchy that are in turn attacking it. We need to use the islands of autonomy as the (decentralized) command centers for attack. This is the real 'dual power' in my opinion, not just a set standard organization, but really alive and vibrant communities of living beings that are standing strong together, active in revolt, and are supporting each other (mentally, physically, and as revolutionaries). We cannot separate insurrection (or the creation of moments where state power and authority disappear, and the situation becomes ungovernable) from the creation of autonomous spaces. In fact, the very act of insurrection creates autonomous space, so why not use autonomous space to foster insurrection? The state will not allow us to build without trying to destroy us and our projects. At this point, we must either defend ourselves our be demolished. Community gardens, squats, and other communal collective projects have all learned this the hard way over the years. We must be prepared to defend our movement from the forces of repression. We must also seek to create and perpetuate a culture of permanent conflict with the systems of domination, so as to not allow our autonomous spaces to be co-opted by the left or agents of recuperation.

In a Sea of Alienation

15.

In the "glory days" or anarchism, everyone was only oppressed by class (or at least, that's mostly what the white men tell us). The negatives of class society was simply that of a physically impoverished existence (poverty, hunger, etc). However, modern life is much more complicated than that. We have become alienated beyond (or on top of) class. We have become alienated to simply being individuals in a sea of other alienated isolated individuals. Capitalism has separated us into classes, yet divided us again and again into service workers, blue and white collar, sex workers, professors, social workers, state workers, middle managers, supervisors, union and non-union workers, teachers, etc. Many of us now work with some sort of control over others. Micromanagement and the modern workplace has made many of us some sort of boss, whether it is over animals, other workers, children, ecosystems, or groups of people. This society separates us again into genders and rigid sexuality, and again into races; reinforcing a systematic set of white privilege, and pitting racial groups against each other. This is not to say that the young white woman driving to work at Starbucks is in the exact same boat as a black Katrina survivor, but what it does mean is that while physically the system may attack us differently, we are all alienated for our very existence by modern life. The destruction of natural community and genuine systems of social interaction has made millions flock to mega churches to find values, meaning, and a place to raise kids, and billions to internet social networking sites, to find love, life, and friendship. As the situationist slogan goes, "Even those that escape physical poverty, can not escape the emotional poverty of everyday life". Modern existence has destroyed real social bonds and meaningful relationships, yet recuperates this desire back to us.

16.

While whole communities may be affected by capital and the state in largely different ways (Mexicano immigrants vs. homeless people), the thing that we all have in common is that we all suffer from the totality. We are all affected by industrial capitalism in various ways (some benefiting more or less, or hurting more or less) but we are all affected. If those exploited and excluded from the system can see their commonalities and common desires and base that into action, then as Barry Pateman says, "Hey, anything is possible." This of course is not to say that it is likely the elites (ruling class) will see 'the error in their ways' and come over to our side, but that various groups within the exploited and the excluded have a common self-interest (although they may not realize it) to stop the current state of affairs.

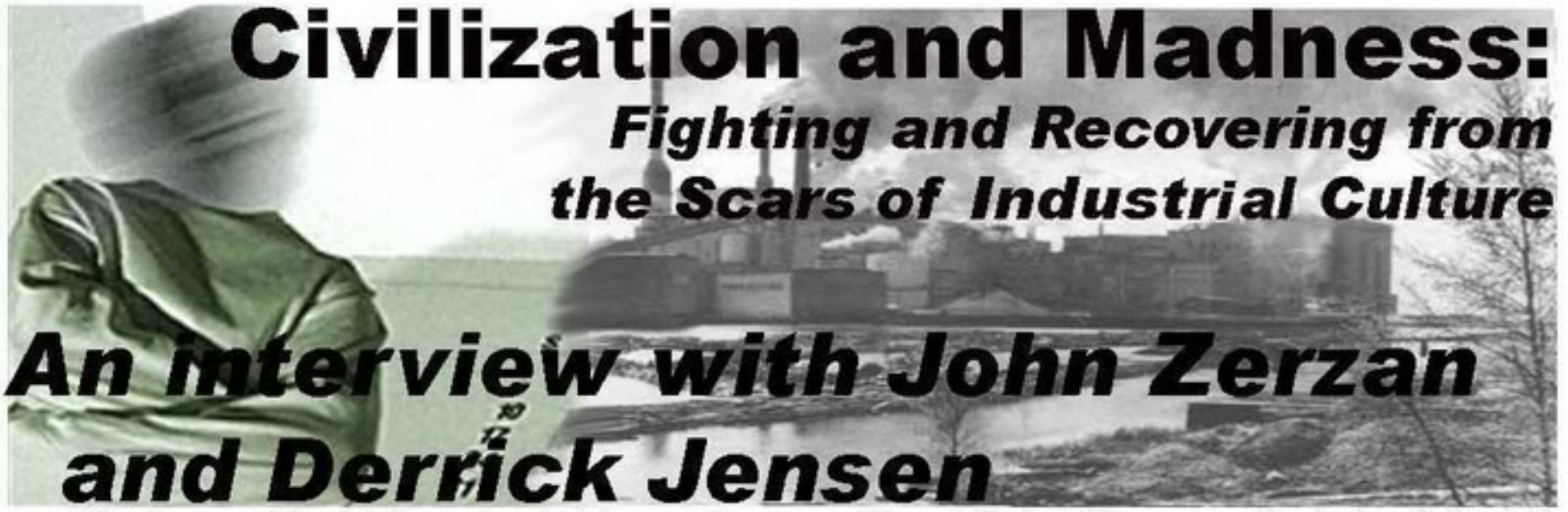
Affinities of Desire

17.

If the modern facets of domination reduce us down to individuals: poked, prodded, destroyed, and broken in a million ways by race, gender, class, sexual orientation, age, education level, and whatever else, then we can start fighting back as individuals. We will start as militants on the search for other individuals that we can share affinity with and form the basic building block of the social war: the affinity group. Or perhaps, the crew, the gang, your friends, your posse, or perhaps just yourself acting in concert with the overall all social war. We say we desire a life of real affinity and free association, well this is it. If our vision of a world that is comprised of autonomous communities of free association organized without hierarchy, then we should not separate the ends from the means. When I say that we should express ourselves through action, I mean that in a million different ways. Opening up autonomous space, general propaganda work, fostering anarchist community, carrying out militant actions, engaging in solidarity work, etc. Our resistance should take the same organizational structure of the society that we wish to create.

18.

We will exist in contradictions and live through action. We will be workers against work, with as much contempt for the boss as for the union bureaucrat. We will love and fight for the wild earth and we will tear down and sabotage the city. We will reject wage slavery and industrial production yet spend hundreds of (wo)man hours on projects that will benefit ourselves and those around us. We will try and physically arm our desires in a real sense, to except our plans for existence as real and meaningful and network with others doing the same. We will respond with action when it is needed, sabotage when it is possible, and revolutionary solidarity when it is called for. Our anti-politics will be clear as day through our actions and relationships with others. We will be irresistible because we will live like we want, fight like we give a damn, and show that our ideals are not an abstraction, but a way to live. We will be race traitors, gender benders, ex-workers, ex-students, a mass of anti-mass, a movement of autonomous zones. We will support those behind bars, so possibly more will do the things that make people wind up there in the first place. We will create a resistance so enticing and wonderful that the reformists and leftists will look like the dinosaurs that they are. We will blur the line between revolution and actually living our lives, until they are one and the same. While we are forced to live under kings, cops, and bosses, we will never relinquish our disgust for them or their system and continue to sharper our knives for the moments when they turn their backs. We will defend what we have and create what we don't. A new anarchist history is waiting to be written, go out and make it.



Civilization and Madness:

Fighting and Recovering from the Scars of Industrial Culture

An interview with John Zerzan and Derrick Jensen

John Zerzan and Derrick Jensen have both become the main front runners of an anti-civilization current within anarchism in the last 10 years or so. Opposing not only the state and capitalism, they both contend that industrial civilization is unsustainable and that humans lived much better lives as hunter gatherers before the growth of cities, agriculture, and the technological apparatus. Both have released several books, done speaking tours, and are involved in various projects, (John Zerzan for instance helps edit the journal Green Anarchy). Derrick Jensen has just released a two book series called End Game and John is set to release Twilight of the Machines sometime in 2007. We asked both of them to respond to a series of questions relating the topics of mental health and how it relates to civilization. John replied via email, Derrick through a phone interview. Let the mediated alienation of symbolic thought begin!

Modesto Anarcho: At a recent gathering of central valley anarchists, there was a large discussion on mental health and anarchist approaches to it. I was shocked to see that out of a large group of about 20 or so, almost everyone had some sort of problem with mental illness. In what way would you say that civilization or mass industrial culture, has a relationship with mental illness?

John Zerzan: Durkheim in the 19th century found that civilization and cities in particular greatly increase suicide and insanity. The correspondence is as easy to see as the correlation between Global Warming and industrialization: the former is a function of the latter. We are all damaged. More and more so, more transparently so. As you say, who doesn't have close friends who suffer from severe depression, anxiety, has thought seriously of suicide, etc.? Domesticated life is increasingly barren and desolate and this is registered in so many sad ways.

One of my touchstone reference points is Freud's Civilization and its Discontents, which predicted - accurately, 75 years ago - that the more civilization there is, the more neurosis there will be. Because domestication, the sine qua non of civilization, is a crippling, enduring wound. We have been domesticated just as a horse is 'broken', our instinctual freedom crippled. Freud said that civilization is impossible without this move, in order to get humans to leave Eros and freedom for work and symbolic culture.

Derrick Jensen: The short answer, is that the culture drives us crazy. We can talk about this on so many levels, from the level of the majority of people spending the majority of their hours doing things that they don't want to do, I mean that's crazy making. We evolved not in isolated little nuclear families, but we evolved in communities, and we also didn't evolve in cities. We have lived, forever, as members of tribes, and clans, and villages. The social arrangements [of the present order] make us crazy. Another way that the current social situation drives us crazy, [is] the level of trauma and abuse in this culture. 25% of all women are raped in their lifetime and 19% more fend off rape attempts. [That's] almost half of the women [being] sexually assaulted and the majority of those sexual assaults come from those that purport to 'love them'. I mean their fathers, their brothers, their uncles, their 'caretakers' of one sort or another. That sort of betrayal of trust is huge. So that's another thing that simply drives us crazy. I'm also not just talking about the women, the men are obviously crazy to be doing that in the first place and they've been driven crazy.

The other thing is that Johnny Livingston who wrote, The Fallacy of Wildlife Conservation and a bunch of other really good books, one of the things that he said was that, 'cities drive us crazy'. One way cities drive us crazy, [again from] John Livingston, is that a lot of people say humans are really violent, but if you pack any other mammal that tight they'll be blood flowing in the streets every night. We're not supposed to be that packed in together, it's insane. Whenever I fly anywhere, I always think, "Gosh, if they stuck us on a tarmac and we were just stuck here, packed in like that in an airplane, how long would it take before we'd be at each other's throats?"

Anyway, back to the other thing John A. Livingston says, that a lot of people say that cities have an overload of senses. It's sensory overload when you go to cities, but he said it's the exact opposite. What I'd like readers in the interview to do right now is to look around and see how many of the sensations, how much of what you are perceiving right now, comes directly from a non-human [thing], and how much of it is mediated by humans, or originates in humans? Once again, we evolved with this wide variety of sensory perception, and we don't have it [now]. Almost everything that we experience is mediated or created by humans and so what Livingston says, (and I really agree), is that we're suffering from sensory deprivation. What happens if you're in an echo chamber? We say something and it bounces back right to us, as opposed to the tree saying something, or opposed to the cloud saying something. What happens to someone that is in a sensory deprivation chamber? What happens is that they begin to hallucinate. So what Livingston says, (and once again I agree), is that

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most of our ideology, basically all of our ideology is hallucination. I mean it's absolutely insane that the world is being killed and yet the thing that is not negotiable is ***this culture***. It's like Cheney says, "The American way of life is not negotiable." That's absolutely insane, because without a land base you don't have a way of life. A land base is everything.

I just read this today, that there was a woman on NPR, or something, up in Wisconsin I think, she was talking about how bad global warming is, blah blah blah. Someone called in and said, "You know, there are those who are saying, that since civilization is killing the planet, that we need to bring down civilization." It was absolutely unthinkable to the woman, she was offended by the question. That's really crazy, when this is killing the planet. I've got a new slogan, "Protect your land base, you can't have sex without it", because you can't have anything [without protecting it] and it's crazy to think that you can.

RD Lang talked about the dynamics that abusive families [have] so they can maintain themselves. He has the three rules of a dysfunctional family, which are also the three rules of dysfunctional culture. Rule A.1 is don't. Rule A.2 is rule A.1 does not exist, and rule A.3 is never discuss the existence or nonexistence of rules A, A.1, or A.2. The point is that, that is crazy making. That's true in an abusive family and it's true on a larger scale. Another thing that's really important, is that everything within an abusive dynamic is set up to protect the abuser. Once again, that makes craziness.

Here's another really small example, but it's just horrible. I'm doing a book right now that basically has to do with shit. It really has to do with waste products and how [in] any sustainable culture, the waste products have to help the land base, (it's pretty obvious). But things like a candy bar wrapper, nobody even knows how the polymers in the candy bar wrapper break down. Nobody bothered to find out! Or there's two million dams in the US, which is pretty obsessive. 60 thousand dams over 13 feet tall, and 70 thousand dams over 6 ½ feet tall. All of those big dams have to have FEMA reports, to say what happens to cities and bridges and everything else, if the dam collapse, because of course every dam will eventually collapse. Guess how many studies have been done on the events of catastrophic dam failure on fish habitat? Zero. That's really fucking insane. I mean, this culture is changing the planet, all this stuff. Everything about this culture makes insanity.

Modesto Anarcho: In what ways has the increased amount of time that people spend working added to the levels of mental illness?

John Zerzan: The more symbolic culture there is, the more work in society. Marshall Sahlins pointed this out. Extraordinary perhaps, but undeniably true. In the U.S. now both parents work, the pace of work - largely due to computerization - is faster, so exhaustion and stress have increased a lot recently. This also goes back one may say, to the origins of the factory system/industrialization, when a big factor was centralizing of producers at long hours: to curb the constant rioting in the countryside, to put it succinctly. It is obvious that when people have little time or energy they are less likely to rebel. A fact that Marx missed.

Derrick Jensen: There's a line by Joseph Campbell, where he talks about that something that was understood by everyone up until the present day, is that to have anything approaching a spiritual life, the first thing that you have to have is leisure. Part of the reason that I am so prolific now, and part of the reason that I am so happy now, is because I spent a lot of my 20's, you could say on one hand getting grounded, and you could say on another hand doing nothing. But I was sitting around by a river, for a couple of years really, I was really really poor, and I was really sick so couldn't do anything, (really sick with Crohn's disease). I spent a lot of time not doing very much, and that really helped to allow me to sort of vomit up the affects of my schooling, and to teach myself how to think, to teach myself how to feel. And to just start feeling, and that sort of leisure, is absolutely crucial.

I don't know how people, who work regular jobs survive, much less mentally survive. I mean, why are we here? I think one of the reasons that we are here is to have fun. Here's another insane thing, I'm sure we've all heard the phrase, "Thank God It's Friday!", what a horrible horrible phrase, what that saying is that "Thank god another week of my precious life has disappeared"!

I used to teach at a university, I always taught just one quarter at a time (the same students) and I always thought that if I had two quarters what would I teach? The first quarter would have been all about freedom, the second quarter would have been all about responsibility. Because if you have freedom without responsibility, that's just immaturity and if you have responsibility without freedom, that's just slavery. People have to have both. Basically, it's like when I was in my late 20's, I was sitting around, and the moment when I stopped sitting around doing nothing in one sense and started working toward something was I had this conversation with a friend of mine. I had

just basically been hanging out for a couple years and this friend of mine says, "You know, you have so many gifts, you're not using those gifts to help the uni verse, to help communities, and if you've been given gifts and you don't repay the universe for giving you those gifts, you're not worth shit." He said this at the exact right moment to me - and I was ready to move on. [Even] today I still have a lot of leisure. But I'm focused with that and I'm serving a community. That's one of the things to, is who do you serve? Where is your al legiance to? Who does your life serve? For me, I try to make it so that my life serves the land where I live and the community of people that I love. My work doesn't serve Exxon Mobile, that's not who I'm serving. That's the question, who are you in service to and what are your gifts and how can you best use them in service to your community, and who is that community? Is that community Chevron? Is that community IBM? Is that community Monsanto? Who is your life actually serving, that's a really important question.

When you have no time, having no time drives you crazy. So it's really really important to have time to reflect, and to ruminate, I love that. You know like a cow, you eat something, and then you sort of digest it, and then you bring it back up and sort of chew on it for a little while, and sendit back down and digest it a little bit more. I think that's what we're supposed to do. It's like I interviewed Vine Deloria several years ago, and one of the things I asked him, was from an indigenous perspective, what is the point of life, and he said "maturity", the point is to become mature. To reflect on what you have experienced and to play your part in the symphony at the right time, that's one of our jobs is to find out what our role is supposed to be in this wonderful symphony of life and then to play it. That's totally different than what we're supposed to do in industrial culture, where everything is cookie cutter, where everything is supposed to be standardized.

It's like it really pisses me off when people write to me and they say, (I get this actually quite a bit), they say, "You know you're books are great and you know you've written all you've need to write, so now I think that you should be an organizer like I am."! It's like FUCK YOU, you know? It's insulting on many levels, but it's also the same old cookie cutter thing, that I'm supposed to be like them, and that's crazy. You (I'm talking to you), you have different gifts than I do, and it would be insane for me to try to form you into a mold that looks like me. Yet constantly that's what our culture does, in part because it's so terrified of difference.

Modesto Anarcho: How does civilization/industrial culture tie into sexual violence and abuse?

John Zerzan: Civilization inaugurates, in my view, the systematic objectification of women and this introduces systematic violence against women. That is why I think that civilization and patriarchy are roughly identical.

Derrick Jensen: Well, part of the difficultly is, as I talked about in Culture of Make Believe , is this culture is based on utilitarianism. There's a great line by a Canadian lumber man, "When I look at trees, I see dollar bills", and if you perceive you see dollars bills when you look at trees, [you're] going to treat them one way, if I look at trees and see trees I treat them differently. When I look at this particular tree, I see this particular tree, then I'll treat it differently still, and the same applies to women. If when I look at women I see orifices, I'm going to treat them one way, if when I look at women I see women, I'll treat them differently, and if I look at this particular woman I see this particular woman, I'll treat her differently still.

When this culture is based on perceiving everyone as to how you can exploit them, or how you can use them, how you can turn them to your advantage, when you perceive everyone else like that, then of course you're going to abuse them, and you're not going to stop voluntarily either because for the most part, because abusers almost never stop voluntarily, because they're gaining tangible benefits from what they are doing.

Another fundamental way that this culture contributes to that - it fucks people up by abusing them in the first place. So if you were abused as a kid, it's a lot easier for you to end up perceiving others as terrifying, so you need to control them. So, not only on a personal level does this happen where people get traumatized as a child, both by their parents and by the schooling system and everything else, and so they come to perceive relations with others as scary, and then not only that, but in addition everything is reinforced with this culture. It's like even something as small as if I was to type a sentence into my word program that says, "There is a tree outside who is dropping needles". The "Word" would say that the word "who" was wrong and I've had to fight editors over that, because they say a tree is not a who. I mean, it's at every level.

There was somebody who really liked my work when we talked before she read A Language Older Than Words, and then she read [it], and she said that she didn't like it at all because she thought that it was insane to talk about hearing the natural world. And that of course that is the fundamental difference between western and indigenous ways of being. Even the

most open minded Westerner, [view the listening] of the natural world as a metaphor. It's insane to close off all of that communication.

Modesto Anarcho: Do hunter gatherer societies have histories of mental problems or sexual abuse? How do these groups solve social problems?

John Zerzan: In a less mediated, artificial life-world there seem to be far fewer emotional diseases. A face-to-face society (band society) is based on direct responsibility to solve problems, the opposite of the case in mass society. I saw something of this in my 15 years in a housing co-op; if someone was pulling something it was easier to deal with, in fact almost unavoidable. So much healthier than resorting to any outside authority.

Derrick Jensen: Well I think that the answer to that would be different by different cultures. Morris Berman wrote a book where he talked about how one of the conflict resolution methods among hunter gatherings, is simply to leave. You and I have some big conflict, well I just go form another band. It depends on which problems we are talking about. Obviously [the indigenous people where I live] didn't destroy the planet, they didn't destroy the region. And the indigenous people who lived where you live, you know the central valley wasn't a toxic cess pool at that point, it was I've heard, extraordinarily beautiful, filled with wildlife, filled with birds, so they obviously didn't have those problems.

So far as problems of sexual abuse, I know that that's pretty widely varied. We need to say that there are some indigenous cultures, that in which women were treated extremely poorly and there are some where women are treated very well. I don't think that you can make an across the board statement, that sexual abuse was non-existent among all hunter gatherers. I don't think that that is true. At the same time, I think that we can say that there are many indigenous cultures, (and I recognize that indigenous and hunter gather are not necessarily the same thing), [where] sexual abuse was not an issue.

Basically if there is one culture that existed that didn't have sexual abuse, that means it's a human possibility and so we can aim for that and we can ask what are the characteristics of that culture. Cause sometimes, people, who accuse me of the whole "noble savage" thing, and I have two response to that. One is that, I rely on contemporary accounts. I rely on accounts written by people at the time. So it's not noble savage bullshit, it's simply what people were saying. The other is that I recognize that there were some indigenous cultures who were really really nasty, of course their nastiness is nothing compared to this culture.

Modesto Anarcho: Can 're-wilding' be a practical way to heal from mental trauma?

John Zerzan: "Re-wilding" or re-connecting with the earth is very difficult in the context of today and there is no cure-all panacea. But I do think it is vital to our healing. A healing, respectful attitude to the earth leads to one toward each other. We can see the that the opposite has been the record of domestication and civilization. All of the qualities needed for the one are needed for the other, it seems to me.

Derrick Jensen: That's a great question, to which I don't really know the answer. I'll tell you my concern. I'm sure it could really help, but I have a concern that [because] the work of sort of healing yourself from this trauma is really difficult work and painful, and I don't think it can be short circuited. I've known a lot of people who have very serious problems and they go to a month of therapy and they say, "Boy I'm cured" and then they go back to the same old patterns. Or they dive into this New Age stuff and do a few rituals and think "Oh I'm cured", or they do this or that and think "Oh I'm all better now". I can see people using rewilding as an excuse to avoid doing the 'real work'. Do you see what I'm trying to say?

Modesto Anarcho (To Derrick Jensen): Basically escape instead of confrontation.

Derrick Jensen: Thank you, yes.

Modesto Anarcho: Can militant resistance to the forces that control our lives possibly help heal mental trauma?

John Zerzan: The film Breaking the Spell expresses that idea by its title: breaking the spell of conditioning and debilitating helplessness begins with resistance. That breakthrough is immensely therapeutic, I believe! It is anything but healthy to be subjugated, a basic degradation that obviously must be overcome.

Derrick Jensen: Yeah I think it really could. It's like one of the things that I've heard people say, and god, I said this in Language Older than Words and I'm so embarrassed, is that if you fight back you run the risk of becoming like they are, but I think that that's bullshit. I think that if you don't fight back, you run the risk of becoming a further slave, you know? I'm not saying you know, reflection by itself once again doesn't do shit, that's just a part of the process. It really pisses me off, I read this thing by some pacifist a while ago, couple years ago, where he said that "The way I work for peace and social justice in this world is by chopping wood and carrying my own water". It's like fuck you, you narcissistic little, whatever. Because "Yes, I'm going to work on my own precious little self, and not do anything larger", it's just crap. But on the other hand once again, I have known people who like a friend of mine [who] was in Earth First! back in the early 80's and he left in the early 90's, because he said that when he joined there were a lot of people who were really angry about forests and when he left there were a lot of people who were really angry and they put that anger onto forest issues. Do you see the distinction that I'm trying to make?

There was a guy who wrote to me a while back, he was all upset at me because his son read my books and then wanted to blow up a dam. I wrote back to him and said, "Look, I don't want your son to blow up a damn because Derrick Jensen says so. What I want your son to do is do the analysis himself, and if his analysis leads him to that, great, and if his analysis leads him to something else, then that's great to." Here's what I'm trying to get at: Yes, I think that fighting back can be a tremendously healing, and helpful, and wonderful, and important thing, but I don't think that people should fight back, for the purpose of gaining healing. I think it can be a really nice and wonderful and powerful side affect, and it can be incredibly liberating, to stand up on your hind legs and fight back. Through whatever means are appropriate. But once I again, I don't think that someone should pretend that militant resistance by itself is enough to

bring about significant healing. I think that militant resistance in addition to that leisure time, in addition to having a supportive community where you can talk about the issues, having a safe space where you can talk about your trauma as well.

I think that another thing that's really important, is that when one fights back, to think very clearly about one's targets. Something that's happened to me, it actually hasn't happened in a long time, but it used to happen in my 30's, that was really distressing. There were a few women whom I dated who I would be like the nicest guy they'd ever met, and the least patriarchal, and everything else, and that's all wonderful, and we start some sort of relationship and then because I'm so safe, that way, all of the anger that they'd ever had toward men comes rushing out and gets projected onto me, because I'm safe. I mean, it's a classic thing, that a lot of times, the adult survivors of child abuse end up hating the bystander more than the perpetrator, because the bystander is always safe. If you're going to lash out, then I think it's really important to do a lot of [figuring] out, and make sure that you're lashing out at the right person.

Modesto Anarcho: Do you think it's possible that there is some significance between the mainstream ADD/ADHD (Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder) hype of the 1990's and the mainstream Bipolar Disorder hype in the 2000's?

John Zerzan: I don't know but I do see things like the huge rise in the incidence of autism as real and troubling. Perhaps there has been an over-eagerness to 'medicalize' so many behavioral phenomena but there is also an undoubted increase in suffering, I would say, and at earlier and earlier ages. The climate of disease is palpable, which at least demonstrates that they haven't turned us into zombies - if they had, we wouldn't be registering so much pain, eh? A very bad bargain I'd say, given the consequences.

Derrick Jensen: I was talking to my mom, two days ago, and she had just finished reading a book about the use of toxic waste as fertilizers. What she said to me, was that she always thought that the ADD, and the ADHD thing was exactly what you said, hype and a lot of it was simply children misbehaving, a lot of it was not children misbehaving, but children being forced into classrooms, etc, etc. But she said, "I don't know, we are swimming in such a toxic stew, that it's also possible that people [are getting affected]." Who knows what all the doses of toxic waste in our blood stream, who knows what those are doing to our psyches? I know that pesticides for example can make children really really stupid. And I'm using stupid in a value neutral sense. Just developmentally, destroy their brains. Before I might have given you some long answer about hype, but now I'm not sure, because the chemicals are fucking us up.

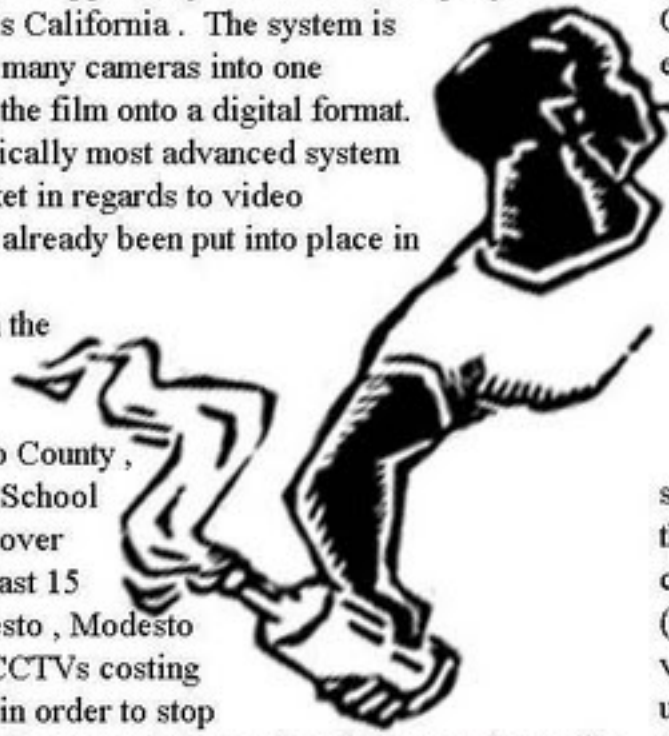
I'm not opposed to short term chemical assistance to problems, or even long term chemical assistance to problems, but it strikes me as really an atrocity that children are being drugged in massive, massive experiments, that make shit loads of money for pharmaceutical companies and make it so that Mommy and Daddy and teacher don't have to actually deal with the child, and instead they drug them out of their skulls. That's reprehensible and inexcusable, that I can say very clearly.

THE PIG'S EYE IN THE SKY

By crudo

"We feed the spectacle poison, disguised as bird seed." – *Surveillance Camera Players*

The central valley is coming under heavy surveillance. Surveillance cameras are quickly dotting our landscape while more and more of our movement and actions are being monitored, taped, recorded, and watched. Stockton is now following Ripon's lead of implementing surveillance cameras and is spending up to $1.6 million dollars (1) to put in cameras around the city (also known as Closed Circuit Televisions, or CCTVs), to 'reduce crime'. The Stockton cameras are being put into public places like parks and in Ripon CCTVs are even over watching the skate park located right next to the police station. In Fresno , the city launched a massive effort to install video cameras across the city in the Downtown and Tower districts, with "[a] large part of the funding for this project com[ing] from a grant from the Department of Homeland Security, administered by the County of Fresno" (2). These two areas are largely poor, working class, and include a large amount of homeless people. The technology will be supplied by the PELCO company which is based out of Clovis California . The system is designed to interlink many cameras into one mainframe and store the film onto a digital format. This is the technologically most advanced system currently on the market in regards to video surveillance and has already been put into place in New York City.



Many schools in the valley are also becoming heavily monitored. In Fresno County , "the Fresno Unified School District (FUSD) has over 100 cameras on at least 15 campuses." In Modesto , Modesto High School put up CCTVs costing thousands of dollars in order to stop graffiti artists, (as well as promising cash to fellow students who snitch on their clandestine artist peers). This of course is not to mention the millions of cameras that are in place everywhere in corporate chain stores (and other businesses) to deter stealing by costumers and employees. According to the retail industry, the threat of employee and customer theft to their businesses is very real. A 2002 study concluded that, "[businesses] attributed more than 48.5 percent of their losses to employee theft, up from 46 percent the prior year. Internal theft by employees cost retailers a record $15 billion" (3). In 1999, a report was issued that stated, "Shoplifting and employee theft losses totaled over $3.7 billion in just 32 U.S. retail companies in 1999. Only 4.41 percent of those losses resulted in a recovery…" (4). It is estimated that only 1 in every 160 shoplifters is ever caught and on average a shoplifter steals about $160 worth of liberated goods from any set business. Will surveillance cameras become a way of putting this joyful appropriation of goods to an end? Only thieves with a distain for the logic of capital and a desire to live by their wits will find out. Surveillance cameras are quickly becoming a solution to a rowdy school population that sees walk outs as a way to achieve social change and school property as less than sacred, and a work and consumer force that realizes the realities of class society and responds to it.

This increased control, surveillance, and monitoring of public space comes along with more and more of this world being built up and used for development in the service of capital. As people's lives within the fabric of mass, alienated, overworked, and stressed out modern society become more strained, the fear by elites of a social breakdown becomes more real. With the technology at their disposal anyway, why wouldn't those in power want the ability to see what is going on all the time? What the subject of CCTVs brings up is not one that can simply be described in liberal terms of "security vs. civil liberties", but of who really controls public space (or any space for that matter)? CCTV technology also helps to decentralized authority, making every possible place where humans can go, come under the gaze of the state or capital. Surveillance cameras, whether they are put in to deter graffiti, stop shoplifting, simply recording in public areas, or set up to spy on employees at work, should be attacked on all levels.

CCTVs Fail to Stop Crime

CCTVs are promoted as a deterrent to crime and anti-social behavior, although most people understand them to be what they are, another instrument in making sure authority goes unchecked in day to day life. As the Surveillance Camera Players (an anarchist/situationist group in New York who carried out various actions against CCTVs) wrote in 1995, "[C]amera[s] as used in surveillance systems monitors the actions of this populace to ensure that, if they react to the commodity in any subversive way (shoplifting, stealing from work, sabotage, vandalism), the "criminal" can be detected and that s/he will take his or her place as product for the crime control industry. Moreover, the detectable presence of the camera in the workplace, in stores, schools, city parks, street corners, even coffee shops serves to remind the individual that s/he is a citizen of a surveilled society" (5).

Like police themselves, surveillance cameras do not actually "stop crime", but they promote the threat of force and violence (which manifests itself in the police) that elites hope will stop undesired actions from happening. However, in Europe where CCTVs in public areas are very common, many reports and studies have in recent years concluded that CCTVs in fact do not stop crime. In England , the "National Association for the Crimi-

nal Rehabilitation of Offenders (NACRO) said cameras had little effect on crimes against the person, including assault. It said CCTV was more useful for preventing property crime, including car theft and burglary. The NARCO report warned against over-investing in the cameras at the expense of "more effective measures" such as street lights" (6). In a recent London report issued on February 20th, 2007, the government study concluded again that CCTVs did little to stop crime (7). Similar reports across Europe, the U.S., Australia, and other places all have stated that CCTVs are unable to make any difference or change (8).

Abuses of CCTVs

To say that authority abuses it's power is redundant, authority in itself is abuse. But, there have been some various instances that have shown that given the power, those behind the cameras will use them for less than 'noble' goals. In August 2006, the Washington Times reported along with the ineffectiveness in CCTVs being able to stop crime, abuses such as, "…a San Francisco police officer was suspended from the department for using surveillance cameras to ogle women at San Francisco International Airport.", were taking place (9). There are many similar abuses that have occurred, many revolving around surveillance cameras being used to spy on people (mostly women) in stores changing or going to the bathroom (10). Almost all of these have been carried out by men against women and often involved police/store workers. This connection between sexual assault and authority shows again the nature of surveillance cameras in action.

In the film, "Still We Ride", about Critical Mass in New York, filmmakers showed how surveillance against bike riders was a key part of the police effort against them. The film also showed how the police used the cameras (in one instance) to spy on a young couple making out while flying in a helicopter over looking the bike riders (11). It was released in 2006 in the UK, that "figures reveal[ed] almost half the number of people arrested in relation to car crime in London are black" (12). This is a result of police responding to car crimes reports issued from camera watchers. Racial profiling has gone digital! Unlike the blurry images of the CCTVs, what is clear is that surveillance cameras do actually what they are designed to do, continue the power and authority of those behind the cameras.

Poking Out the Pigs' Eyes

"Only someone completely distrustful of all government would be opposed to what we are doing with surveillance cameras." - *NYC Police Commissioner Howard Safir, 27 July 1999.*

But with all of this talk about CCTVs, the threat to the rebel shoplifter and graffiti artist, the increased surveillance in schools, work, and public space, there is some room for cheer. While the technology that makes CCTVs work so well is impressive, video quality is still very poor on many systems. Many outside cameras have been reported to have grainy and blurry images. Many cameras are sometimes staffed at only certain parts of the day, or in the case of some stores, only recorded onto tape, (to be watched latter in the event of a crime). This is not to say that video tape recordings should not be taken seriously, but simply to state that surveillance via CCTVs is not definite. Many CCTVs are easy to spot and easy to hide from. Cameras are also easy to attack and destroy, they are after all, simply plastic and metal.

Anarchists and others (mainly just angry everyday people) have been active on the front to attack surveillance cameras since they have been appearing in great numbers across the world. Perhaps one of the best known and inventive groups to go up against CCTVs, is the New York based Surveillance Camera Players. The Surveillance Camera Players, (or SCP for short), was a "anarchist, situationist inspired group" that would perform skits and plays in front of cameras, while talking and passing out information critiquing CCTVs. The SCP wanted to use the situationist idea of detournment (or taking something used by capital and changing it into a revolutionary message) to break up the boredom of everyday life and make people think. In an interview, SCP participant Bill Browne said this on the nature of the groups pranks : "First of all, we want to disrupt their everyday routine of people. And we want to show them that there is no need to be terrified by these cameras. Plus we want to show that not all protests are loud and boring, and that one can do this with a sense of humor and that individuals and small groups can accomplish a lot" (13). The SCP also did walking tours of New York, showing people where the cameras were located throughout the city and where they were hidden in the urban environment. The idea of performing radical plays in front of surveillance cameras spread to other areas and there have been SCP groups reportedly doing actions in places as varied as Turkey and Sweden.

Street theater of course has not been the only way in which people have sought to attack surveillance cameras. Sabotage has also been another tool used by t hose hoping to put a dent in the network of con trol. In 2004, a large CCTV tower in South Wales was torn down and burned by "vandals" (14). In Greece, various anarchists groups have attacked surveillance cameras, often times burning them, stealing them, or simply smashing them. One such action was reported in the U.S. anarchist journal Green Anarchy. "50 anarchists destroyed two surveillance cameras close to the Panteion University of Athens. Traffic was held up thanks to a banner reading "sabotage the systems of social control" while at the same time comrades were setting the camera control boxes on fire. The same cameras had been destroyed last January, but were replaced during the summer" (15). Actions in Greece have continued against the cameras.

In Britain, sabotage against CCTVs on the road has even spurred into existence a "vigilante group", according to the New York Times News Service in Oct. 2006. "Among the ways that motorists have [attacked cameras]: spraying the cameras with paint; knocking them over; covering them in festive wrapping paper and garbage bags; digging them up; shooting, hammering and firebombing them; festooning them with burning tires; and filling their casings with self-expanding insulation foam that, when activated, blows them apart from the inside out. Visual examples can be seen on the Web site of a vigilante group called Motorists Against Detection, which displays color photographs of smashed, defaced and burned-out cameras -- pornography for the anti-camera movement." The group's website shows pictures of cameras burned and de-

stroyed and can be viewed at: http://www.speedcam.co.uk/welcome.htm. In Wales, attacks on surveillance cameras have become so popular, that the government wants to put more cameras in to watch the original cameras (17)! In Scotland in 2005, police began looking for a man (presumed to be in his 40's) that had gone on a graffiti spree in opposition to CCTVs. "Earlier incidents have seen him gouge holes in the walls with a screwdriver and attach stickers on its windows with messages such as "Stop Spying" and "No CCTV"." (18). Various sabotage actions continue to happen throughout the world.

While street theater, arson, sabotage, theft, and other avenues of attack are being used, various student and worker walk outs and wildcat strikes have also taken place in places like Canada, Australia, and Luxembourg (among others), all in defiance to surveillance cameras being put into work or schools (16). In an age where some workplaces are trying to get their employees to undergo 'hand-scanning' (19) and reactionary (largely) white and middle class workers are calling for systems to identify 'illegals' (20), surveillance and technology are fast becoming some of the most used weapons of the class war. A world in which immigrants, anarchists, and other 'undesirables' who could be tracked with a variety of cameras and identified through retinal, hand, and facial identification is possibly not that far off. If we do not take steps to destroy this system now, we will pay for it later.

Conclusion

"This campaign is ongoing and is being professionally organized via the internet throughout the UK and will be orchestrated by direct action to take out speed cameras!" - *Motorists Against Detection*

While the future of surveillance technology certainly is scary, I hope that the reality that everywhere people seem to be attacking it, is at least cause for a smile. It is impressive that across the globe people have responded with inventive detournment, sabotage, direct action, arson, student and worker wildcat strikes, and whatever else was at their disposal to attack CCTVs. The glory of these actions is that they show that a large variety of radical tactics can be used in attack and that they can be carried out by either groups or individuals. Hopefully, anarchists will include themselves in attacking the encroaching tentacles of the surveillance octopus. Until all the cameras are burned - let all your rocks fly true.

1.) ***Modesto Bee*** - http://anarcho209.proboards98.com/index.cgi?board=centralv&action=display&thread=1171062654

2.) ***Mike Rhodes, Central Valley Indymedia*** - http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2006/05/24/18250691.php

3.) ***Retail Industry*** - http://retailindustry.about.com/od/statistics_loss_prevention/l/aa021126a.htm

4.) http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/2192911.stm

5.) ***Surveillance Camera Players Website*** - http://www.notbored.org

6.) ***BBC News*** - http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/2192911.stm

7.) ***This is London*** - http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/news/article-16856213-details/CCTV+%27does+not+stop+crime%27/article.do;jsessionid=VQM4FbGSV4vv7HLWvH97dYGnNytvLL09nJRxNJr4btJCMSKppW2n!1047430814!-1407319225!7001!-1

8.) http://www.notbored.org/cameras-not-effective.html

9.) ***The Washington Times*** - http://www.washtimes.com/metro/20060813-121827-2123r.htm

10.) http://www.notbored.org/camera-abuses.html

11.) http://www.notbored.org/camera-abuses.html

12.) ***Times Online*** - http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article717768.ece

13.) http://rhizome.org/thread.rhiz?thread=1819&page=1#2722

14.) http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/wales/south_east/3676550.stm

15.) http://www.greenanarchy.org/index.php?action=viewactiondetail&actionId=622

16.) http://www.notbored.org/camera-protests.html

17.) http://www.notbored.org/camera-protests.html

18.) http://edinburghnews.scotsman.com/edinburgh.cfm?id=2148002005

19.) http://www.cbn.com/CBNnews/95380.aspx

20.) http://www.heritage.org/Research/Immigration/em999.cfm

More information:

Motorists Against Detection - http://www.speedcam.co.uk/welcome.htm

Surveillance Camera Players - http://www.notbored.org/the-scp.html

How to Take Out CCTVs - http://aia.mahost.org/act_cctv.html

Sling on the System

From the Palestinian youths of the intifada, to the battlefields of old - the sling is a weapon of war. Made simply by items that are easy to get and even easier to use, the sling is the perfect tool for launching projectiles over short and long distances. Here's a step by step guide to slinging.

The sling is the perfect weapon for those without many material resources. Using only a handful of items you can quickly have a weapon that can inflict serious damage (so be careful!). They are also a great training tool and fun activity to use in groups. Great for blockades, black blocs, or action under the cover of dark, the sling is a tool that can be easily made and remade if it needs to be quickly discarded. Many various ways of throwing are possible and a wide variety of projectiles can be used while throwing. Rocks of course are everywhere, as well as pieces of asphalt or concrete, (and whatever else - use your imagination!)

To make a sling, first get the "pouch". The pouch can be some material from an old pair of jeans, a piece of leather that you don't want anymore, the inside of a glove, or whatever else will do. The material must be strong enough to be able to hold rocks and other heavy duty items. It must also be strong enough to hold the items and deal with the stress of slinging them. Onto this material you will have two cords coming off. These cords can be made with hemp, nylon rope, a shoe lace, or whatever else is available. The distance from cord to pouch should be the

This is a view of the pouch and one end of the cord. The sewing of the cord into the pouch gives it more strength and reinforces the whole sling. If you do not sew your sling, cut holes at ends and then braid the various cords together. You may also want to use duct table to reinforce the entire braid (especially on the end touching the pouch). This also stops tearing and wear.

(Above), an example of sling outstreched, with loop around middle finger and thumb and index holding other cord.

Begin by holding sling out from you, using the pouch to aim at target. With the front hand, swing the pouch end up behind you (for underhand) or down behind you (for overhand).

After using the motion from the lead hand, use the back hand to gain force for full swing. Use entire body to add more power. Let go when back hand crosses target. Try various ways until aim is dead on.

distance from your heart to the end of your hands. The longer your sling is, the more powerful it is. The shorter your sling is, the less powerful but possibly greater accuracy is has.

While making your sling, we have found that it is best to sew the cord around the pouch and then braid either two or three strands into one larger cord. One cord end will fit around your middle finger (this will stay on your hand the entire time) by the use of a loop. Make sure this is comfortable and will not cause you complications. The other will be held by your thumb and index finder of the same hand. On the end of this cord, it's a good idea to make some sort of knot so that your fingers have something to grab on. After completing your sling, pull it tight so that you know it is structurally sound. When you sling, the force of the swinging propels the object around in the air until the thumb and index finger releases it. The force of this motion causes the sling to snap and because there is another cord that attaches to your middle finger, the rock goes flying off and your sling stays with you. With practice, you will be able to sling, shoot, and reload at a very fast pace.

Here are four basic slinging stances to use. The first is the easiest, the underhand (see bottom pictures on other page for more detail). This is the "launcher" and is the easiest way to launch rocks far away from you. This means that the rocks go up high and far and then come crashing down. This would be perfect is you were aiming at a line of riot pigs or another large far away target. The next, is the overhand. This goes down and back behind you and releases projectiles downward. This means that objects generally have to be close to you if you plan on hitting them, (although it would be perfect if you were on top of something). The next is "the helicopter". This move is started when the person takes the sling and throws it to their left (or right if left handed) which gets the sling moving in a helicopter motion. As the sling finishes the rotation, it is released. This is the hardest one to pull off, but the most accurate. The last is a combination of the underhand and the helicopter (and our personal favorite). In this move, the sling is held and thrown at a 45 degree angle with the left hand (or again with the right if left handed) and then swung around with the back hand. This combines more of the accuracy of the helicopter and the power and distance of the underhand swing. With all four of these moves, try and only allow one rotation before letting go of the sling (although you don't have to). It helps to use the motion of your entire body while making the swing and also try and take running steps to add power. This is by no means a complete list of moves, experiment and try to find new ways!

When practicing with your sling, make sure to do it in a large open area where you will not hit anyone. Fields or abandoned lots are perhaps the best and make sure to find places with lots of practice rocks. Slings are very powerful and can be potentially very dangerous if you hit someone, so watch who is around you and those you are slinging with. If you feel uncomfortable practicing right away with rocks or other hard objects, use fruit such as oranges to practice. You can also practice with a friend using a hacky sack, throwing it back and forth to build up accuracy. Set up some targets and practice by your self. Also be sure to stretch your arms and body before slinging and in the beginning expect some sore muscles. Remember, rocks can possibly leave finger prints, so wear gloves if possible. Sling on the system!

For more info on slinging go to: www.slinging.org

Resistance Is Fertile:

Smashing Green Capitalism & Letting Green Anarchy Grow

By Luna's Light Warrior

A few years ago I was sadly and quite easily sucked into green-consumerism. I felt that I really wasn't helping the Earth unless I was spending bunches of money (and most of my small income) on Earth friendly products from "environmentally conscious" companies. I had been convinced by the green-left that I could rescue this beautiful land by trading in environmentally-unfriendly corporations, vehicles, energy, food, factories, and house cleaning products for environmentally-friendly ones. I even went to the Green Festival in SF hoping for some more insight on how I could live my life more eco-friendly. However, all I found was a two story building filled with people whose goal it was to keep the market alive. What I have found out since then (on my own, not with the help of the media of course) is that change won't happen through the market, change is only going to happen when we live a life in deep connection with the earth.

Most of these big companies that are now toting eco-friendly labels such as "USDA Certified Organic," "Free Range," "Pesticide Free," or "Fair-Trade," aren't really concerned whether or not all of the old growth forests in the world are destroyed, or if your local park is bulldozed to be replaced by a strip mall, or about high levels of mercury from factories that's being emitted into our water systems and causing very harmful health repercussions, or that the air pollution in some areas is so bad that children are growing up suffering with severe and acute cases of asthma and other respiratory illnesses, or about worker mistreatment, or about animal suffering and exploitation. What these big companies do care about is capital. Their first priority isn't to save the environment. Their priority lies in what's going to make them money; and that is to exploit the earth and the consumer's wants and desires. If it takes a little bit of changing how they manufacture their product to make sure they are still raking in the high profits, than that's what they'll do.

When I became aware of this I asked myself, "How is this really any different?" Corporations are still corporations, mass production is still mass production, industrial agriculture is still industrial agriculture, greenhouse gas emissions are still green house gas emissions, worker and animal exploitation is still worker and animal exploitation. Essentially, nothing is really changing. A lot of oil, natural recourses, land, and beings are being used and exploited in order to produce on this large of scale, even to make eco-friendly products. So it's clear to me now that buying in to "green" companies really isn't going to cut it. In order to truly liberate ourselves, the Earth, and the animals we need to cut capital and consumerism out completely.

A beautiful example of a way we can free ourselves from and smash the system of the market and its many harms is to grow our own food and reclaim unused, abused, and/or neglected land for nature. Food grown organically may be less harmful to the earth and our health but it still takes a lot of recourses and land to grow mass amounts of food and ship it to pro cessing facilities and then ship it out to stores so it can be paid a high price for. The area I live in was once covered in lush wetlands which, not so long ago, was home to many different species of ani mals, plants, and indigenous cultures, most of which are no longer here. Most of the land has long since been taken over by agriculture, just one of the many means of capitalism. There are countless pieces of land here where all of the plant life has been ripped out and now all that remains are empty dirt lots resentfully awaiting to be topped by more shopping strips and other cen ters of consumerism.

Early this Spring, my partner and I started a local guerilla gardening project on a little piece of vacant land hugged between a road and a parking lot. It was littered with garbage but had lots of grass growing so we decided it would be a good home for some more plant life. We liberated some small potted trees and other small plants, cleaned up all of the trash, and started planting. We also started sprouting different vegetable and fruit seeds which will be ready in mid-Spring to plant in the garden and will produce food for us and the community. This is now an open piece of land where friends and others in the community can grow food for themselves as well. No market involved there.

Starting a garden like this is so easy and fun. Collecting seeds and soil for free is simple. It's also really easy and quick to liberate potted plants. Just get a few friends together, find a spot, get some seeds and plants, and you have instant bonding with your community and with the Earth! Make sure to give your plants plenty of attention and water when they're growing so your garden may thrive. Another fun way you can spread a little bit more

nature around is to make seed bombs and throw them in places like cracks in the sidewalks, empty dirt lots, and road dividers. Grass seeds and wildflower seeds are really good to put in seed bombs because they grow really easily without much attention and water. To make seed bombs check out the Seed Grenade Recipe from www.lizchristygarden.org. You can also make them very simply with just some soil and seeds. Mix some seeds into the soil, add a little water to it if necessary to get the soil to a consistency where it will stick and hold into a ball shape. Mold the soil with your hands, let the balls dry a little bit to make sure they'll hold together, then go seed bombing! These are great ways to build your connection with your community and with the Earth and cut out the market. And it really is great fun. Try it in your town, get creative, get crazy, ***smash green capitalism and let green anarchy grow!***

Guerrila Gardening Resources:

Windsor Guerrilla Gardering Collective - http://wggc.resist.ca/

Guerrilla Gardening (UK) - http://www.guerrillagardening.org/

Indigenous Permaculture - http://www.indigenous-permaculture.org/

Primal Seeds (UK) - http://www.primalseeds.org/guerrilla.htm

Sprial Seed - http://www.spiralseed.co.uk/index.html

Peak Oil and Anarchy Blog - http://peakoilanarchy.blogspot.com

Feral Forager (Guide to Living Off Urban Environment) - http://www.wildroots.org/ff.php

HOW TO MAKE SEED BOMBS!

Assemble the following ingredients:

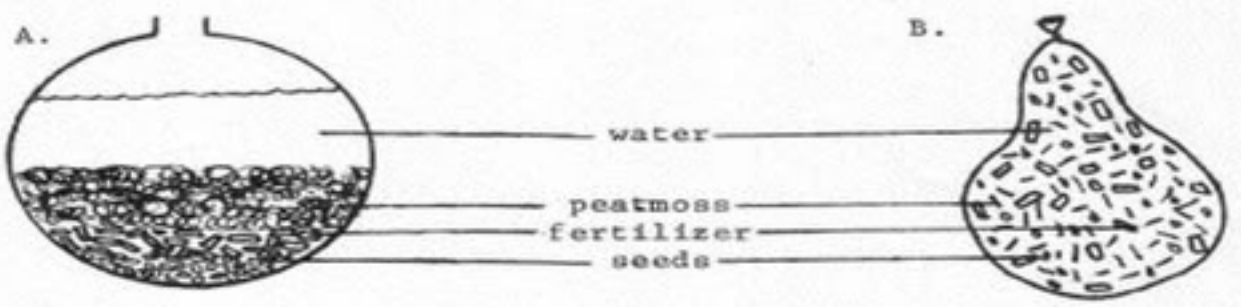
A. Old glass Christmas ornaments
Small funnel
Pelletized, time-release fertilizer
Peatmoss "crumbs"
Tissue
Seeds - see below

B. Small balloons
Funnel
Pelletized, time-release fertilizer
Peatmoss "crumbs"
Seeds - see below
sink faucet

Add seed and fertilizer to grenade membrane:

Add seeds and fertilizer first, followed by moist peatmoss "crumbs". Stuff the opening at the top with a small piece of tissue. Gently shake to mix thoroughly.

Add seeds and fertilizer first, followed by moistened peatmoss "crumbs". Stretch the mouth of the balloon over the faucet mouth and carefully fill with water. Tie off the opening. Gently shake to mix thoroughly.



Instructions for use:

Choose a lot that has a fence and is legally inaccessible. Calculate in advance how many grenades will be needed to cover the area. Check carefully before throwing. Observe all normal safety precautions. Suggested throwing techniques are: for Christmas ornaments - use an underhand throw; for the water balloons - use an overhand throw.

Seed list

for early fall	for early spring	for late spring	for early summer
Soybeans	Batchelor Buttons	Cosmos	Sunflower
Clover	Dianthus	Portulaca	ornamental grass mix
Winter rye	Wildflower mix	Zinnia	Marigolds
Cleome	plain old grass	Nicotiana	Zinnia

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

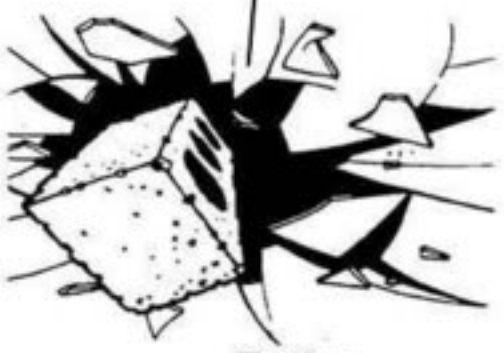
Connect the dots...

General Strategy:

Down with the Empire, Up with the Spring - http://www.eco-action.org/dod/no10/empire.htm

The Question of Organization - http://325collective.com/The%20Question%20of%20Organization.pdf

Autonomous Self-Organization and Anarchist Intervention - http://www.geocities.com/seainsur/pages/writings/autonomous.htm



Tactics:

Dropping Out for Students - http://www.crimethinc.com/downloads/drop.html

Black Blocs for Dummies - http://www.infoshop.org/blackbloc.html

Eco-Defense:MonkeyWrenching Guide - http://www.omnipresence.mahost.org/inttxt.htm

Survival Without Rent - http://www.habiter-autrement.org/07.squat/02_sq.htm

How to Fire Your Boss - http://membres.lycos.fr/anarchives/site/how%20to/title.html

Postering/Graffiti - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TlBEV5_tgp4

General Information on Anarchy:

Infoshop - www.infoshop.org

Anarchist FAQ - www.infoshop.org/faq

Crimethinc - www.crimethinc.com

Journals and Publications -

A Murder of Crows - http://www.geocities.com/amurderofcrows1/

Rolling Thunder - http://www.crimethinc.com/a/rt/

325 Collective - http://www.325collective.com/

Green Anarchy - http://www.greenanarchy.org

Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed - http://www.anarchymag.org/

News/Blogs -

Infoshop I-News - http://news.infoshop.org

Anarchist News - http://www.anarchistnews.org

A-Infos - http://www.ainfos.ca/en

Bombs and Shields - http://bombsandshields.blogspot.com/

Central Valley IMC - http://www.indybay.org/centralvalley

Indymedia US Hub - http://www.indymedia.us

Indymedia International - http://www.indymedia.org

Anti-Politics.Net - www.anti-politics.net/forum

Interactivist Info-exchange - http://slash.autonomedia.org/

Crimethinc//Blog - http://www.crimethinc.com/blog/

...and Arm Your Desires

Security Culture:

Security Culture: For Activists - security.resist.ca/personal/securebooklet.pdf

Security Culture/Tech Security - http://security.resist.ca/

Prisoner Support -

Eco-Prisoners - http://www.ecoprisoners.org/

Earth Liberation Prisoners - http://www.spiritoffreedom.org.uk/

Anarchist Black Cross - http://www.abcf.net/

Critical Resistance - http://www.criticalresistance.org/

Green Scare - http://greenscare.org/

FBI WitchHunt - http://fbiwitchhunt.com/

Jericho Movement - http://www.thejerichomovement.com/prisoners.html

Root Force! Road Show

April 24th, 2007
Unitarian
Universalist
Fellowship 2172 Kiernan Avenue Modesto
More info: (209) 380-7904
anarcho209@yahoo.com

The Earth is being killed. We are losing cultural and biological diversity at astounding rates, and despite all our efforts, these rates are only accelerating. The Earth is being murdered by a global system that tortures and murders every human or nonhuman that it cannot dominate. This system kills hundreds of thousands a year in wars for oil and water. It tortures millions of nonhuman animals a year in laboratories and factory farms. It destroys indigenous communities, dispossesses small farmers, enslaves workers in fields and factories, and poisons every living thing with chemicals and radiation.

SO IF THE EARTH IS BEING KILLED

MUSIC!
WORKSHOPS!
LITERATURE TABLES!

Root Force is an innovative campaign making the connection between Ecocide and Genocide, creating a framework in which diverse actions target those who enable oppression. this can be achieved by focusing on specific, winnable projects in Latin America. Join Root Force and a crowd of Folk Punk kids for a night of Radical Education & Entertainment at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Stanislaus County!

BANDS!

...WHAT ARE WE GONNA DO ABOUT IT?

More information:
www.rootforce.org

www.myspace.com/whateverthefolkittakes
Armed Metropolis

www.myspace.com/slugsrevenge
slug's Revenge

www.myspace.com/smilewhiskey
WHISKEY SMILE!

No drugs, no alcohol, no violence.